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In memory of
my late husband,
best friend,
and fellow philosopher
who loved beauty
Myles Brand
(1942–2009)

6. Jenny Saville Remakes the Female Nude: Feminist Reflections on the State of the Art

DIANA TIETJENS MEYERS

After school I walked home across the football field. . . . I carried my big black leather binder full of notes in front of me, hugging it to my chest with both arms, my textbooks piled on top of it. All the girls did this. It prevented anyone from staring at our breasts, which were either too small and contemptuous, or else too big and hilarious, or else just the right size—but what size was right? Breasts of any kind were shameful and could attract catcalls. . . . But not to have any at all would have been worse.

—Margaret Atwood, “My Last Duchess”

When I was young, my mother read me a story about a wicked little girl. She read it to me and my two sisters. We sat curled against her on the couch and she read from the book on her lap. . . . The girl in the story was beautiful and cruel. . . . Because I sat against my mother when she told this story, I did not hear it in words only. I felt it in her body. I felt a girl who wanted to be too beautiful. I felt a mother who wanted to love her. I felt a demon who wanted to torture her. I felt them mixed together so you couldn’t tell them apart. The story scared me and I cried. My mother put her arms around me, “Wait,” she said. “It’s not over yet. She’s going to be saved by the tears of an innocent girl. Like you.” My mother kissed the top of my head and finished the story and I forgot about it for a long time.

—Mary Gaitskill, *Veronica*

Margaret Atwood’s vignette tells a familiar tale of endemic female body shame. The schoolgirls are already locked in the double bind of feminine narcissism—at once needing attention and being humiliated by it. Unsure of

what constitutes bodily perfection, they are tormented by uncertainty about how to be physically okay, let alone lovable. Mary Gaitskill traces this syndrome back into childhood. Her parable of the wicked beauty's fall from grace and her redemption warns of the perils of investment in physical beauty. Because Alison, the listening child, is in fact beautiful and prizes her beauty, the fairy-tale treats her to a premonition of her own damnation. As Gaitskill writes this scene, Alison not only hears the lesson that her self-love is a curse, the lesson resonates through her mother's body, and her own tiny body absorbs it.

What makes these passages an apt introduction to a discussion of the aesthetics of the female nude is that they narrate how gendered beliefs, norms, and values become somatic. Atwood and Gaitskill, more than most writers, are attuned to what I call the psychocorporeal dimension of women's experience, and they are exceptionally adept at depicting it. In my view, contemporary British artist Jenny Saville paints visual analogues of these literary scenarios. She reconfigures the female nude, I argue, by endowing her figures with psychocorporeal attributes.

Shawn Gallagher's distinction between the body image and the body schema provides a framework for my argument. Because the body image and the body schema are corporeal phenomena that are also meaningful dimensions of subjectivity, I use the term "psychocorporeal" to designate the cross-cutting category in which they belong. They are psychological because the agentic capabilities of the body schema and the grasp of one's physical body that is captured in the body image are comparable to but not equivalent to mental capabilities.¹ Although they are not merely physiological processes, the body image and the body schema are embodied; hence they are corporeal.² By attending to psychocorporeal capacities, we can better understand the phenomenology of gendered bodies as well as the liabilities and potentialities of the female nude.

After reviewing feminist critiques of the female nude in Western art, I take up a selection of Saville's paintings. A self-proclaimed feminist whose work feminist critics often praise, Saville is concerned with body image issues, and I discuss how she reconfigures representational practices with respect to feminine body images. However, the most exciting potential for feminist analysis of the state of the female nude derives from the concept of the body schema, for it recognizes the agency of the human body. My key question, then, is by what pictorial means and to what extent Saville succeeds in representing feminine body schemas. Although Saville has not fully explored psychocorporeal interpersonal agency in her nudes, I argue that

she radically remakes the female nude by painting psychocorporeal agentic capabilities into her images. Moreover, I suggest that the success of her transfiguration of the female nude—her success in representing gendered psychocorporeity—owes much to her reflexive art practice.

Current Theory of the Body

Recent philosophical work on the body lays to rest the dualist, misogynist dogma that the body is the tool of the mind. The enculturation of the body is necessary to the formation of a self.³ Corporeal disciplines reproduce gender, class, race, and other hierarchy-enforcing components of identity.⁴ Abstract knowledge and thought depends on physical "scaffolding" that incorporates the organic body and extends beyond it to supplementary equipment.⁵ The animate body is the locus of practical knowledge of objects in space.⁶ Dispensing with rational deliberation, the skilled body generates behavior that is appropriately coordinated with situations.⁷ Mind is in the body, these theorists maintain; it is not merely contingent on brain functioning.⁸ Or, as I prefer to put it, the human body has psychocorporeal as well as biological properties.

In this section I consider one strand of work on psychocorporeity—Shawn Gallagher's neuroscientifically informed, phenomenologically motivated distinction between the body image and the body schema. Gallagher contends—rightly, in my view—that a great deal of philosophical mischief stems from conflating these two systems. I present his distinction between the body image and the body schema in preparation for using it, first, to sharpen Lynda Nead's critical analysis of the female nude in Western art and, second, to analyze the advances that the nudes of Jenny Saville signal.

According to Gallagher, the body image is a "system of perceptions, attitudes, and beliefs pertaining to one's own body." It includes your visual picture of your appearance, your conception of the workings and state of your body, and your feelings about your looks, your health, and other aspects of your physical condition. You have short-term body images—your self-image in this situation right now—and a long-term body image—your cumulative and projected self-image. Although you are not constantly aware of your body image, you can bring it to consciousness at will.⁹ The body image is what social psychologists and clinical psychologists are talking about when they speak of body image distortions as contributing to self-esteem deficits and eating disorders. The self-assessment component of the body image is the source of the anxiety of Atwood's young protagonist, and it is the subject of Gaitskill's fairy-tale.

The body schema is a “system of sensory-motor capacities that function without awareness or the necessity of perceptual monitoring.” According to Gallagher, conscious control over your actions takes place at the level of intentions and objectives—for example, intending to go home from school via the football field—not at the level of orchestrating the neuron firings, muscle contractions, and so forth that must happen to carry out intentions, nor at the level of the body schema. By organizing perception according to your purposes and by pragmatically controlling and adjusting posture and movement, the body schema’s “preconscious, subpersonal processes” mediate between your goals and physiological processes.¹⁰ The body schema reduces the need for conscious planning and eliminates the need for supervising the minutiae of movement. Comprised of countless skills and competencies, your body schema ensures that you hold yourself erect while showering, stand at a socially acceptable distance from conversation partners, flirt in a manner that communicates your attraction, drive your car without crashing, and much more besides. The unnamed girl in Atwood’s story who clutches her books to conceal her bosom has acquired a self-protective bodily routine that is part of her body schema and that is constitutive of her gendered identity.

Whereas the body image is primarily an imagined self-portrait that secondarily affects choice and action, the body schema is primarily an agentic apparatus that may be partially represented in the body image. The body schema can never be fully accessible to consciousness, and, to the extent that it can be brought to consciousness, it becomes part of the body image.¹¹ At the time Atwood’s self-conscious schoolgirl was hiding behind stacks of books, she acted automatically. Her body schema maintained her self-protective practice, and she thought nothing of it. Writing about her adolescent experience later, she notices that she could have carried her books differently, and she realizes that she had an ulterior motive for carrying her books in that particular way. Now she is recording her behavior and its significance in her long-range body image. The body schema and the body image reciprocally influence one another. Your body image rules out the development of some body schema capabilities and encourages the development of others, and your body schema’s capabilities frame how you see yourself.

I find it helpful to isolate four dimensions of the body schema: cognition, virtue, versatility, and memory. Psychocorporeal cognition is the sensitivity of the body schema to the use-value of affordances as well as its sensitivity to the meanings of ambient affect, attitudes, and the like. Thanks to her body schema’s sensitivity to affordances, Atwood’s schoolgirl makes use of her books to manage her anxiety. Thanks to her body schema’s kinesthetic apprehension

of meaning, the perils of beauty are viscerally implanted in Alison’s impressionable body. By psychocorporeal virtue I mean corporeally encoded values that install a basic motivational structure in the body schema that facilitates and enhances agency. Courage, curiosity, prudence, patience, communicativeness, modesty, dignity, respect, friendliness, empathy, compassion, kindness, and generosity are among the values that might be integrated into your body schema. What we see in the Atwood and Gatskill stories is the perversion of corporeal virtue. Modesty and kindness are twisted into distrust and secretiveness that permeate the characters’ body schemas. Psychocorporeal versatility has several forms. It includes your physical vigor—energy, stamina, strength, agility, suppleness, and so forth—as well as the extent of your accumulated know-how. It also includes somatic mood—that is, your sense of bodily competence. Psychocorporeal mood depends on at least two factors: 1) the safety spectrum, which ranges from trust to fear, and 2) the comfort spectrum, which ranges from being at ease and relaxed to being stressed and taut. The fictional passages I have quoted say little about vigor, but both depict a way and tense psychocorporeal mood.

Alison’s body is the body of the traditional female nude—a body that is beautiful on the surface and yet at war with itself. Psychocorporeally, Alison never for a moment forgot the story of the cruel, beautiful girl, although she didn’t consciously recall it until much later. The reading infuses her body schema with conflict-laden corporeal knowledge of the meaning of feminine beauty. As an embodied memory, this knowledge inflames her body image. Throughout her life, Alison is either disproportionately enamored of her beauty or disproportionately denigrative of it. Embedded in her body schema, the memory of the story skews Alison’s perception of circumstances as well as her compartment when interacting with others. In the first pages of *Veronica*, then, we witness a dysphoric, dysfunctional body image and a dysphoric, dysfunctional body schema in the making—the genesis of one kind of feminized person. None of this psychocorporeality finds its way into the canonical female nudes of Western art history.

The Problem of the Female Nude

Jenny Saville expresses ambivalence about the female nude:

Could I make a painting of a nude in my own voice? It’s such a male-laden art, so historically weighted. The way women were depicted didn’t feel like mine, too cute. I wasn’t interested in admired or idealised beauty.¹²

And for good reason. Lynda Nead's study of the nude in Western art history accounts for Saville's chariness.

According to Nead, the pre-feminist female nude "is meant to transcend the marks of individualized corporeality by means of a unified formal language." Manhandled in this way—that is, contained by patriarchal artistic conventions—the naked female body is converted into a beautiful object of (presumptively male) contemplation and connoisseurship.¹³ In other words, archetypal paintings of nude women are the antithesis of the living and lived body, for the artist strips individualized psychocorporeity from the image. In many instances, no sign of reflexive awareness subjectivizes the figure as she gazes at nothing and no one in particular. Other works impose an alien subjectivity on the figure: Anticipating Alison's patriarchally poisoned narcissism, they lock the figure's eyes on a mirror image that casts doubt on her beauty.¹⁴ Because they lack evolving body images as well as working body schemas, no hint of bodily vitality or motility spoils the static splendor of these female forms. Because depriving a human figure of an authentic body image deprives it of any simulacrum of self-ownership, this pictorial maneuver grants viewers permission to stare and to scrutinize. Because depriving the figure of any semblance of the power of self-movement relieves beholders of the need to read cues of incipient action, they are freed to enter the elevated zone of aesthetic appreciation. Exemplary nudes of the Renaissance and Baroque suspend interpersonal demands while spotlighting a bare female body.

In the Western painting tradition, Manet's much discussed *Olympia*¹⁵ is a liminal work in which the conceit of peeping in on an unclothed woman in a private moment is jettisoned and in which some practices of objectification, though not idealization, are revised. Manet gives Olympia eyes with a strange bidirectional gaze that forthrightly addresses viewers while also appearing distracted from the scene before her.¹⁶ Starkly delineated, her tensile, pale body lacks the yielding softness of earlier works in this genre. As a result, Olympia's body hints vaguely at resistance to the viewer's desire. Yet this figure is unmistakably on display as to-be-consumed.

Manet paints as idealized a body as any premodern nude.¹⁷ Olympia's—or rather, the model and artist Victorine Meurent's—own body image does not enter into this tableau. An ideal image of female corporeal perfection replaces it.¹⁸ Olympia's body schema, as expressed by her pose and Manet's facture, reinforces the message of feminine availability. Awaiting inspection, Olympia complies with the proprieties of feminine modesty and conceals her pubis with one hand. No proclamation of female sexuality or demand

for sexual reciprocity spoils the viewer's pleasurable dalliance. Moreover, Olympia's smooth, unmarked body betrays no memory of her previous encounters with clients in this boudoir. Devoid of desire and experience, the figure of Olympia reduces psychocorporeally animate flesh to an idealized cipher. At most, her complex glance and her porcelain body suggest dissociation from her demeaning profession—the defensive agency of the powerless in the presence of the powerful. To discern a form of agency unencumbered by Olympia's subordinate social position, you must look elsewhere in the painting. If you construe the black cat with its sharp glare and its angry arched back as Olympia's familiar, it is arguable that Manet exports her active psychocorporeal agency to this feline attendant.

Nead picks up the story of the female nude in her discussions of several second-wave feminist strategies for contesting the idealizing, as well as the objectifying, heritage of this pictorial theme.¹⁹ Some feminist artists challenged the denial of female sexuality in traditional nudes by foregrounding an iconography of female genitalia. Taking aim at the ubiquity of youthful, white, heterosexual female bodies in Western female nudes, others attacked the racist, ageist, heterosexist attitudes presupposed by these works and trumpeted the diversity of female bodies. Performance artists used their own nude bodies to insist on corporeal interiority, to reject the value of feminine purity, and to stage transgressive agency.²⁰ Photography, sculpture, textile and needlework, collage, installation art, and performance art were the principal media in which feminist artists lodged their protest and proffered alternative visions.

Still, some feminist artists favored paint on canvas and wrung feminist statements from this medium.²¹ Joan Semmel painted a nude that shows (surprise!) how her body looks from her own point of view—*Me without Mirrors* (1974). Alice Neel painted all-but-unprecedented nude portraits of women—seven of pregnant women and one of herself as an octogenarian artist.²² Semmel and Neel seized the prerogative of self-definition. Other painters opted for indirect tactics. Engaging in a bit of table-turning, Sylvia Sleigh parodied Ingre's seraglio pictures by painting a roomful of lounging, full frontal male nudes (*The Turkish Bath*, 1973).²³ Late in the 1980s, Sue Williams appropriated the pictorial and narrative conventions of comic strips to represent decidedly imperfect bodies in lewd states of undress, scabrous poses, and abusive scenarios.²⁴

With the exception of Semmel's painting, this work digresses from the issue of the female nude. Neel is a portraitist; Sleigh takes on the male nude to comment implicitly on the female nude; Williams inveighs against

violence in heterosexual relations. I do not gainsay the originality of these approaches or the trenchancy of these images. However, none of these artists is chiefly concerned with bending the topos of the female nude to feminist purposes.

It was not until well into the 1990s that the project of recuperating the female nude in painting really took off. That is when Jenny Saville (along with other young women artists, notably Lisa Yuskavage and Cecily Brown) made their presence felt in the artworld. Critics have dubbed Saville's images cruel. I prefer to say that she is a painter of the not-dennure. Her images are confrontational. They exult in the "too-muchness" that, according to Susan Bordo, drives women into obsessive dieting and exercising, even life-threatening eating disorders.²⁵

Banishing orthodox, aesthetically validated conceptions of feminine allure from her pictures, Saville paints fantastic female bodies. Of course, the titans of the Western female nude—Titan, Velázquez, Rubens, Manet, Degas, Renoir, Bonnard, Modigliani, Matisse, Picasso, to name but a few—depict fantastic female bodies too. Like Saville, they enlist fanciful hues to represent skin tones; and they elongate and truncate the anatomical form of their models. But the great male artists depict eerie states of bodily vacuity and confine inwardness to facial expressions (if the figure is accorded any trace of subjectivity at all). In contrast, Saville psychocorporealizes female flesh and makes female nudes that are imbued with credible body images as well as potent body schemas.

Prop, Hem, and Fulcrum

There is a litany of points that virtually every commentator makes about Jenny Saville's work, and they are worth reiterating here. She paints "gargantuan," "gigantic," "mountainous" figures that are blenished, pocked, bruised, scabbed, venous, bulging, obese, wounded, riven, and occasionally sutured. A stylistic descendant of Francis Bacon and Lucian Freud, her painterly technique is superb. Her "ugly," "monstrous," "grotesque" subjects clash with the manifest beauty of her painting. She doesn't paint from live models. She works from photographs of her own body, sometimes photographs of friends or models, and from images found in medical texts and news sources. She is well versed in feminist theory and acknowledges this influence.

In interviews Saville is highly articulate about her feminist, aesthetic, and art-historical concerns. Her theoretical and pictorial sophistication with respect to feminine body image issues is beyond doubt. Although she has

relatively little to say in interviews about the body schema per se, I argue that her paintings speak volumes on the subject. All of her full-length nudes represent subjectivized bodies—that is, psychocorporealized figures. Some of her images replay normalized feminine body images and body schemas as painfully awkward enactments of culturally prescribed gestures or inscriptions. Of greater interest is her painterly treatment of flesh itself. I discuss one painting, *Hem*, in which her pictorial description of the organic density of flesh adumbrates the human body's potential for intelligent, innovative agency and a second, *Fulcrum*, in which her representation of flesh discloses the emotional strains and bonds that undergird a trio of body images and correlated body schemas.

Saville's Account of a Negative Feminine Body Image

Saville's 1992 suite—*Propped*, *Prop*, and *Untitled* (each is oil on canvas, 84 × 72 in.)—is a sustained and probing meditation on the woes of feminine body images. Unprepossessing nude giantesses are stationed on little stools. Thick legs pretzel around slender stanchions into positions that supposedly keep them from falling off. Ponderous hip flab droops over the edges of the stool seats. Pendulous breasts, elephantine thighs and calves, mounded stomachs, and bloated buttocks occupy most of the picture plane. Small heads recede above these avalanches of flesh. The *Propped* figure (plate 5) gazes down from high above, daring you to look at her and revile her body, yet she squishes her breasts between her arms and digs her fingertips into her thighs, clumping the flesh. The *Prop* figure (fig. 6.1) gazes into the distance above viewers' heads, her lips set in a grim pout, while her arms and hands conspire to conceal her breasts. In *Untitled* (fig. 6.2), the figure's eyes are closed tight, her forehead is gnarled, and one arm is hung around her chin to hide her mouth—hers is an expression of unbearable anguish and shame. Not one of these figures caresses herself. Not one takes any delight in her body.

It is no accident that I have described the torsos and legs of these figures before describing their heads. The former are huge and protrude aggressively toward the viewer. They fill the lower three quarters of these works. The heads are small and pushed to the top margin of the canvases. These placements and proportions suggest two interrelated ways of reading these images.

There is reason to regard these images as projections of the contours of a common type of negative feminine body image, as opposed to images of bodies that actually look this way from a certain angle. Only virtuosos yogis of this girth could assume these positions. As a viewer, you sense the artifice of these poses because you kinesthetically register the tug of gravity, the

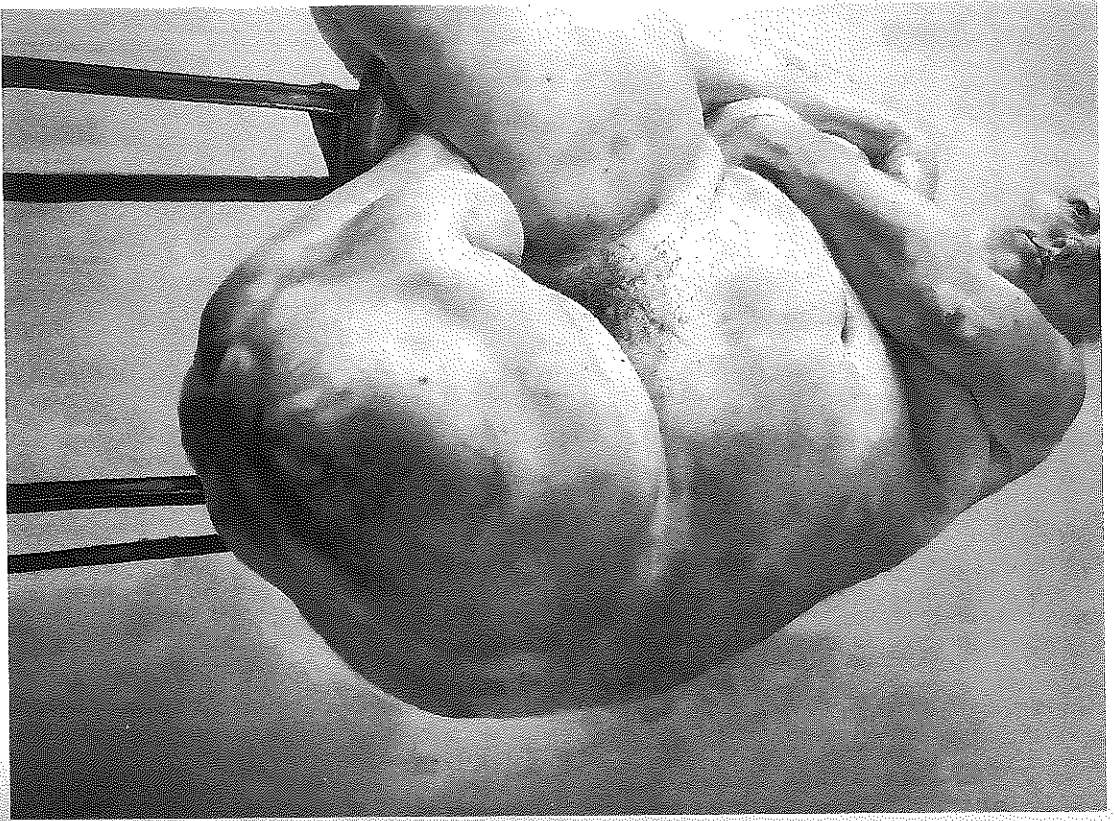


Figure 6.1. Jenny Saville, *Prop*, 1992. Oil on canvas, 84 × 72 in.
© JENNY SAVILLE. COURTESY OF THE GACOSIAN GALLERY, NEW YORK.

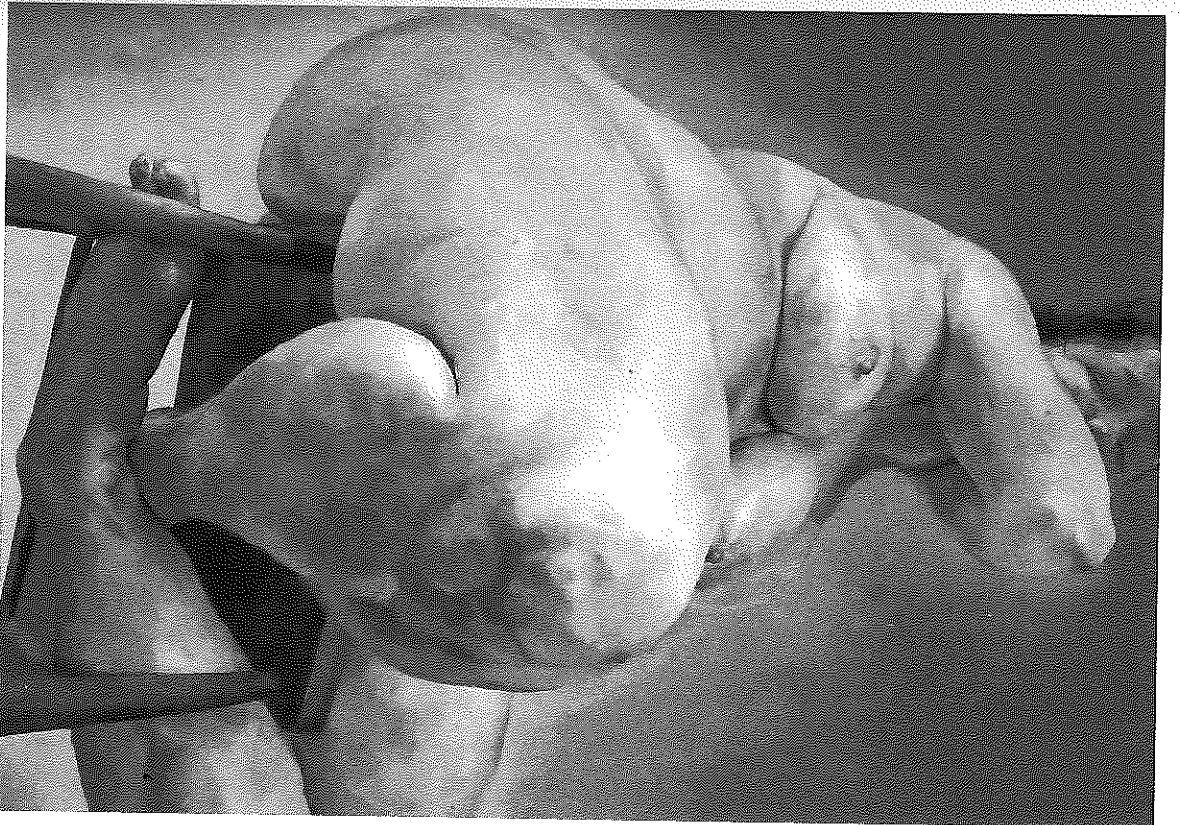


Figure 6.2. Jenny Saville, *Untitled*, 1992. Oil on canvas,
84 × 72 in. (pictured 84 × 60 in.). © JENNY SAVILLE.
COURTESY OF THE GACOSIAN GALLERY, NEW YORK.

strain on joints, and the crush of avoirdupois. At the same time, Saville invokes the feminist trope of the pedestaler. Symbolizing the disempowering, heterosexist adoration that is conferred on “proper” women and that is underwritten by beauty ideals that inflict a malign narcissistic syndrome on women, the pedestaler all but impales the figure in *Propped*.²⁶ Coupled with the unstable disposition of the pictorial volumes, this metaphor transports viewers into the psychic world in which emotional investments and disinvestments determine what things look like—the world of the gendered body image. For the women whose body images Saville portrays, body dysphoria wildly exaggerates the dimensions of their hips and thighs.²⁷ So vast are these fantasized bodies that self-concealing gestures leave almost everything exposed. Their mottled, bruised coloration exudes consternation—they are deemed insufferable, and they are suffering.

It is also possible to interpret these images in light of Saville’s use of perspectival devices. If you focus on her foreshortening of the figures in these paintings, they read as representations of large women seen from the standpoint of a Lilliputian. This interpretative slant not only extends what I have said about negative feminine body images, it also discloses a challenge these images level at the art-historical tradition. Assuming that each of these paintings depicts a woman’s body image and that she is the implicit minuscule viewer, the pictures convey the power of feminine body images to overshadow actual women and distort their self-understandings.

With respect to art history, underscoring Saville’s foreshortening of her figures clarifies how her paintings challenge the typical male artist’s objectification of women’s bodies. The placid faces and lounging bodies of the most revered nudes of the Renaissance and Baroque periods invite the spectator’s stare, no questions asked. Although Manet’s *Olympia* ushers in a more ambiguous transaction between the viewer and the female nude, its deindustrialized, idealized treatment of the nude figure still allows the viewer to visually ravish the figure without feeling gauche or, worse, prurient. Saville’s *Prop* suite nullifies this scopophilic entitlement. Her foreshortened, foregrounded bodies command your attention and then embarrass you in the act of staring.²⁸ In Holmes’s words, “For the viewer who has already gawked at the body, it’s decidedly uncomfortable to arrive at the face and confront the psychological presence of this thinking and feeling human being.”²⁹ You are staring, but you have no right to stare.

Yet Saville is not content to regale us with intimidating images of massive female bodies or poignant images of feminine body dysphoria. She wants viewers to find beauty in these works:

There is a thing about beauty. Beauty is always associated with the male fantasy of what the female body is. I don’t think there is anything wrong with beauty. It’s just that what women think is beautiful can be different. And there can be a beauty in individualism. If there is a wart or a scar, this can be beautiful, in a sense, when you paint it. It’s part of your identity. Individual things are seeping out, leaking out.³⁰

Saville resists aesthetic orthodoxy. The *Prop* suite critiques the norms that contribute to rampant body dysphoria among women and also undertakes to redeem overlooked beauty in the figures she portrays. Saville discovers beauty in individual persons whose bodies are marked by life, as opposed to the formulaic beauty of idealized nudes. Importantly, she does not accomplish her goals of resistance and redemption by air-brushing and prettifying those of her subjects’ attributes that are widely considered ugly. Such cosmetic manipulation would falsify her images and reproduce the very ideals that damage women’s body images in the first place. Instead she expresses the beauty she perceives in her subjects through the quality of her painting—exquisite brushstrokes tenderly dab the figure, and unsinting swaths of oil salve it. By deploying her painterly technique to represent her figures with care and respect for their distinctiveness, she articulates her repudiation of customary beauty norms without erasing or camouflaging the ostensible flaws of her figures. “I made a body that was too big for the frame, literally too big for the frame of art history,” Saville remarks.³¹ I would add that her bounteous application of pigment on canvas bursts the constraints of the aesthetic regime of the female nude and proffers an alternative understanding of beauty along with a vehicle for aesthetic appreciation of it.

Saville’s Organicism and a Feminine Body Schema

Before I consider what I take to be Saville’s major achievement with respect to portraying female body schemas, I briefly review the more pedestrian, though not ineffective, strategy that she employs in the *Prop* suite. Saville defines her project as follows: “I’m interested in the physical power a large female body has—a body that occupies a lot of physical space, but also someone who’s acutely aware that our contemporary culture encourages her to disguise her bulk and look as small as possible.”³² The subjects of *Propped*, *Prop*, and *Untitled* are women who are disconsolate because they are overweight. They fold their calves under their thighs, and they flatten their breasts or squeeze their thighs together. The reddened, jutting knee and elbow joints in *Prop* attest to the strain of deflecting social scorn. The figures’ efforts to compress and conceal their bodies betoken stunted body

schemas—innumerable skills foregone, energy diverted from productive exertion, chronic stress and insecurity. These bodies have internalized the cultural ideology that equates slenderness with desirability—indeed, with bare acceptability. To their lasting, possibly irreparable detriment, this censorious message permeates and impairs their body schemas.

In contrast, the figure in *Hem*³³ is unbowed by beauty norms despite her naked hugeness (fig. 6.3). Staged from a puny mortal's point of view, the painting shows a warrior goddess who towers over viewers.³⁴ Her bearing is operatic. No waif weakling, she stands erect, her shoulders thrown back, her breasts high, her eyes intent on the distance. A descendant of ancient statues of Nike and Athena (e.g., the *Agora Nike*, Stoa of Zeus, late fifth century BCE; *Nike* by Paionios, 420–410 BCE; the *Pergamene Athena*, second century BCE), her thighs are massive, and her torso is propelled forward. But unlike the female inhabitants of Olympus, Saville's figure is multidimensional—she is a mother as well as a warrior, and her sexuality is intact.

The hem that gives the painting its name is the figure's cesarean scar.³⁵ Yet the rust-tinged red streak separating her pubis from an abdominal roll of fat initially appears to be nothing more than a crease in her ample flesh. Availing herself of this ambiguity, Saville discloses the figure's maternity without so accentuating it that her womanhood becomes equated with her motherhood. Below the scar, strands of wiry pubic hair squiggle every which way. Here Saville acknowledges the figure's sexuality without courting the male gaze. By layering semitransparent paint over the figure's *mons veneris*, Saville blurs the hairs and deflects pornographic voyeurism. Fertile, but not reducible to her fertility; sexual, but not reducible to her allure for men; powerful, but not reducible to the misogynist fantasy of the engulfing mother—this figure is styled after a lioness whose cubs are playing nearby. She is a vigilant, militant, fierce defender of the innocent and helpless.

What I have just described is a representation of feminine psychocorporeity that is consummately agentic. The key to this achievement is what I call Saville's "organicism." Reflecting on her artistic development, Saville notes, "Paint mixed a flesh color suddenly became a kind of human paste."³⁶ In Saville's practice, oil paint stands in for living tissue, and one function of painterly technique is to convey corporeal density, temperature, and exertion—that is, flourishing or thwarted psychocorporeal agentic capabilities. Her art is a sustained inquiry into the chromatics and textures of embodiment and embodied agency. I make my case for this claim through a close reading of *Hem*'s facture.



Figure 6.3. Jenny Saville, *Hem*, 1999. Oil on canvas, 120 × 84 in.
© JENNY SAVILLE. COURTESY OF THE GAGOSIAN GALLERY, NEW YORK.

The *Hem* figure is partitioned into two sections defined by distinct palettes and painterly qualities. The figure's right side, from her shoulder down through her torso and into the rear of her thigh, is composed of chilly whites, putties, khakis, and Persian blues.³⁷ Big multidirectional brushstrokes—including zigzags and crisscrossing shafts punctuated by little blobs—join with thick impasto to endow the surface of the cool section with tingling energy.³⁸ The figure's left side is composed of warm yellows, beiges, pinks, and pale turquoise blues. A central set of unidirectional, diagonal brushstrokes reinforced by fine ridges of paint define the contours of her right thigh. Concave, horizontal sweeps of paint undergird the figure's belly, while a line-up of rounded brushstrokes arcs down from her waistline to give volume to the roll of flesh above her pubis. Dabs of orange are scattered on her upper torso, which, like her bosom, is modeled in smaller, more blended, less salient brushstrokes. All together, the calmer colors, moderated paint handling, and firm volumes of the warm section produce an effect of solidity, strength, and competency. The orange dappling that seems to emanate from deep in the figure's flesh hints at bodily potentials that are held in reserve.

Two small patches of solvent-induced, tendrilous paint stand out from the rest of *Hem*'s facture because there are only two of them in the painting. Because of their distinctiveness, they function visually as the painterly equivalent of exclamation points. Moreover, they call attention to additional dimensions of the figure's agency.

One of these patches is in the middle of the warm side of the figure's upper torso—right where you'll find your solar plexus. If someone socks you in the solar plexus, your diaphragm is likely to go into painful, disabling spasms, and you'll probably report that you've had the wind knocked out of you.³⁹ In this atypical little passage, Saville marks a vulnerable spot that must be protected to preserve agentic control. Magnificent though she is, this figure is not armored against violence and injury.

The second of these patches of curdling paint is located at the intersection between a prominent band of pure white that runs along the figure's waist in the cool section and a pinkish line in the warm section that continues along her waist. This passage highlights a site of exchange between the energy of the cool section and the powers of the warm section. Feelings of coldness can be invigorating, as when one steps into a cold shower after a session in the sauna. They can also destabilize a warm-blooded creature's equilibrium and prompt it to seek heat. In both ways, chilliness animates the body. But unless this energy is harnessed to well-honed agentic capabilities, it cannot give rise to anything but chaotic, counterproductive behavior.

The discipline and practical intelligence of the body schema are necessary to agency. To depict an agentic woman, Saville inserts a striking transactional, transactional passage where energized, unruly impetus converges with an individual's repertoire of psychocorporeal capabilities to give rise to action. At this juncture, motivation combines with the body schema to support agency.

Two features of Saville's drawing augment and refine her treatment of the body schema in *Hem*. At the outer edge of the cool section, Saville uses a soft dark line to outline the shape of the figure's body. This line subtly but definitely distinguishes the figure's back from the background. Whatever is behind her is past and is not subject to her will. In contrast, Saville fudges the boundary of the warm side. On this side, the painting of the figure and the background frequently interpenetrate. Whatever might lie ahead for her is still amorphous. The contrast between the two sides gives the impression that this undeniably stationary figure is nevertheless projecting forward, heading into the future in a spirit of openness to change.

To bring my interpretation into focus, I return to the four aspects of the body schema that I identified earlier—psychocorporeal memory, cognition, virtue, and versatility. The *Hem* figure's cesarean scar indexes her psychocorporeal memory of giving birth. This is an experienced body that remembers the pain of labor and the preciousness and fragility of life. With respect to psychocorporeal cognition, Saville presents a kinesiologically alert and attuned figure who, despite being still, is manifestly ready to go into action. The figure's unflinching, proud demeanor betokens the psychocorporeal virtues of courage, resoluteness, and self-assurance. This is not a submissive or easily intimidated woman. Saville conveys psychocorporeal versatility through the painting's facture as well as through the form of the figure. The scintillant energy of the cool side and the concentrated power of the warm side imbue the figure with its dynamism—that is, the synergy between her vigor and know-how. Although Saville does not show the slightest trace of the figure's musculature, her flesh does not appear to be blubbery, nor does it appear to be weighed down. You picture this woman striding, not waddling or shuffling. The figure's posture suggests a psychocorporeal mood that is best characterized negatively—she is not in repose, but neither is she tense or alarmed.

On the whole, the figure comes across as prepared to encounter new situations resourcefully, and as capable of formidable endurance if need be. Her bearing connotes uncompromising determination backed up by colossal might. Hers is a body that refuses to be contained, suppressed, manipulated,

or controlled by anyone else. In no uncertain terms, *Hem's* figure defies the beauty ideals that Caritskill's Alison fulfills so perfectly but that beleaguers her agency. Whereas *Hem's* figure is a paragon of psychocorporeal agency, Alison is a victim of psychocorporeal asphyxiation.

Saville's Organicism and Relational Psychocorporeity

I conclude this section with a word about a possibility that Saville has not yet pursued as far as she might—the body schema's relational capabilities. *Fulcrum* (plate 6) is typical of Saville's multifigure works to date.⁴⁰ Three nude female bodies lying in alternating directions are piled on a gurney, forming a pyramid. Thirty-year-old Fiona lies on her back at the bottom; Saville's twenty-nine-year-old body curls into a semifetal position facing viewers on top; Sadie, the titular fulcrum, who is Fiona's sixty-year-old mother, lies on her back between them, twisting her upper body toward viewers. At the feet of the middle figure and just below the shoulders of the upper and lower figures, a cord ties this "body pile" together and secures it to the gurney. According to Saville, "It's different generations of flesh touching one another."⁴¹

The key term here is "touching": "It's not about the primacy of vision, it's about using paint, its materiality, in a way that can evoke tactility."⁴² In an infantile, somnolent gesture, the top figure's left arm circles the middle figure's ankles, her pudgy hand shoved between the middle figure's left leg and the bottom figure's belly. Less than a hug, more than a dangling limb, this arm is in contact with all three figures. Elsewhere, Saville elaborates on the theme of touching in painterly terms. At several places along the line between Fiona's right thigh and Sadie's left thigh, and along the line between Sadie's and Jenny's right thighs, patches of paint disobey the law of the sovereignty and separateness of bodies. In these passages, Saville uses one and the same mark to simultaneously construct two ostensibly distinct forms. To touch is to blur boundaries and blend into another. In other words, to be a person committed to interpersonal relationships is to have a body image that is not altogether separable from those whom you touch and who touch you.

That these figures haven't met up freely introduces a motif that is at odds with the concept of the unitary self. Bound together, the figures are compelled to touch. Indeed, the lashing is pulled so tight that it pinches their ample flesh and forces it to bulge. It hurts them to touch. Thin, rigid, vertical strips of paint traverse the three bodies. A blood-red strip runs from above Jenny's eye to Fiona's shoulder. A shower of gray-blue strips thread their way

in and out of Sadie's head and chest and Fiona's lower legs. Saville strings these women together like popcorn garlands. Touching penetrates deep into their flesh, and touching is inextricable from their selfhood and subjectivity.

Yet each of the bodies has its own painterly and agentic personality, its own body schema. Serrated, diagonal palette strokes accented by linear ridges of paint model Fiona's torso and define the directionality of her muscular exertion. Her body strains against the others' weight and struggles against being squashed. Horizontal lines predominate in Sadie's thighs and make them into a platform. Yet swirls of thickened paint in her abdomen suggest the torsion she musters to turn her upper body toward the viewer and resist being sandwiched between the younger women. Jenny's body has the smoothest texture and most delicately modulated coloring. It is the most relaxed of the three. Yet her face and the arm she wraps around Sadie's ankles bespeak neediness. Although Saville individualizes the three *Fulcrum* figures and assigns them different positions in their relationship, it is clear that their relationship conditions their agentic possibilities.

Fulcrum is a portrait of a triadic relationship, as opposed to a depiction of three women interacting. Sensory tactility, emotional intimacy, and agentic interdependency are privileged over active exchange. The configuration and qualities of the volumes symbolize mother/daughter bonds and tensions more than they depict lively interaction among individuals at different stages of life. I do not mean to deny the power of this image, nor do I mean to belittle the urgency of its subject matter. This painting accomplishes what it sets out to accomplish, and the three figures are far from psychocorporeally vacant. However, I wish to point out that there is a key dimension of female body schemas that Saville has yet to broach—namely, the capacity to engage collaboratively or conflictually with another person apart from a close relationship. As yet, her multifigure works disregard the possibility of representing this aspect of feminine psychocorporeal interpersonal agency.

Reviving the Female Nude—Saville's Reflexive Practices

Saville has said that the subject of her work is "extreme humanness"—a conceptualization that goes a long way toward explaining the pictorial foment of her work.⁴³ Extreme humanness is a paradoxical expression. It suggests both the utterly and typically human and the marginally and atypically human.⁴⁴ Saville's work neglects no permutation of humanity. Her oeuvre portrays gendered, sexed bodies that are extremely human, that push humanity to extremes, and that in some instances are *in extremis*.

In the cultural imaginary that underwrites traditional female nudes, the female body is a neatly bounded entity that is covered in smoothly curved, alabaster or golden skin. Her pose is redolent of come-hither languor or narcissistic indulgence. Her body is on display for the visual delectation of men, albeit disguised as aesthetic contemplation.

What is a woman artist at the end of the twentieth century to do? Saville's de-idealizations and de-normalizations of the female body, however alienating they may be at first blush, are crucial to her struggle with the Western art-historical tradition. As well, they are indispensable to her recuperation of the female nude as a subject for women artists and as an object of aesthetic interest for women.

In three respects, Saville creates female nudes that repudiate patriarchal domination and comport with feminist values. In Saville's hands, the female nude becomes a vehicle for representing existential states that are depressingly familiar to many Western women. In her *Prop* series, the eruption of psychocorporeal insecurity and anxiety about one's bodily defects comes as a disconcerting burst of realism and pathos to anyone accustomed to female nudes that erase or displace feminine subjectivity. In a related gambit, Saville appropriates the female nude to challenge feminine stereotypes and norms. The figure in *Hem* is an unapologetically big woman, who takes her space and stands her ground. Neither pretty nor acquiescent, this figure is stunning—a redoubtable, raw, nonidealized vision of feminine beauty as grandeur. Most importantly, Saville's nudes are vibrantly psychocorporeal. Her figures have individualized body images and body schemas—interiority and agency. Saville constructs unconventional, yet legible, poses for her nude figures, and her gestural, expressive handling of pigment enlivens the bodies she depicts. Her nude bodies are stamped with memories, sensitized to social norms, and imbued with cognition, virtue, and versatility. Whether hobbled by social norms (the *Prop* suite) or thriving despite them (*Hem*), Saville's nudes are equipped with psychocorporeal agentic intelligence.⁴⁵

I suspect that one reason that Saville plumbs the human body as deeply as she does is that she frequently bases her paintings on her own body.⁴⁶ Her artistic process precludes treating human bodies as inert matter. "I use my body as a prop," she says. "It's like loaning my body to myself. So the flesh becomes like a material."⁴⁷ To transform her own flesh into *nature morte* would be to repress and betray her own experience of the subjectivity of personhood—her psychocorporeal being. Particularly for an artist whose huge canvases entail highly skilled, whole-body activity.⁴⁸

Eschewing the detached, spectatorial perspective of the painter contemplating "his" model, Saville's self-sourcing personalizes her working methods. As she puts it,

I don't like the idea of just being the person looking. I want to be the person. Because women have been so involved in being the subject-object, it's quite important to take on board and not be just the person looking and examining. You're the artist but you're also the model. I want it to be a constant exchange all the time.⁴⁹

The evidence of the paintings suggests that this role reversal has been remarkably productive. Fully identified with the image of flesh she confides to canvas, Saville strives to overcome the inner and outer, mental and physical polarities:

It's because the nervousness of revealing is inherent that I'm interested in it. . . . It is about being brave enough with myself to offer up that anxiety.⁵⁰

Bodging forth different dimensions of her self-understanding in different works, Saville makes psychocorporeal nudes that rescue the hoary female nude from somatic vacuity.

NOTES

¹ The first epigraph is from Margaret Atwood, "My Last Duchess," in *Moral Disorder* and *Other Stories* (New York: Doubleday, 2006), 59–60. The second epigraph is from Mary Gaitskill, *Veronica* (New York: Pantheon, 2005), 3–4.

² I am grateful to the University of Connecticut for a sabbatical leave that gave me time to work on this essay and for a University of Connecticut Provost's Research Excellence Award that gave me funding to revisit two of the paintings I discuss. I am also indebted to the editor of this collection for her valuable comments on an earlier draft and to Kristina Grob for her indispensable assistance in preparing this manuscript for publication.

³ Because you can retrospectively articulate what goes on psychocorporeally in the form of a planning narrative, intelligent corporeity is analogizable to the mental. But because you don't actually "talk to yourself" silently or out loud, when your body schema is organizing your conduct, and because making decisions psychocorporeally isn't equivalent to a verbalized decision-making process, intelligent corporeity is not assimilable to the mental.

⁴ Shaun Gallagher stresses the peculiar neither-fish-nor-fowl status of the body image and the body schema in *How the Body Shapes the Mind* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 235–37.

3. Elizabeth Grosz, *Volatile Bodies: Towards a Corporeal Feminism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994).
4. See Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble* (New York: Routledge, 1990); Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter* (New York: Routledge, 1993); and Shannon Sullivan, "Reconfiguring Gender with John Dewey: Habit, Bodies and Cultural Change," *Hypatia* 15, no. 1 (Winter 2000): 23–42.
5. Andy Clark, *Being There: Putting Brain, Body and World Together Again* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1999).
6. See Maxine Sheets-Johnstone, *The Primary of Movement* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 1999); and Sean Dorrance Kelly, "Medeau-Ponty on the Body," *Radical n.s.*, 15 (December 2002): 376–91.
7. Hubert L. Dreyfus, "Intelligence without Representation," *Cognitive Sciences Initiative at the University of Houston*, <http://www.hfac.uh.edu/cogsci/dreyfus.html> (1998).
8. Recent work in neuroscience reinforces this philosophical trend. For example, Antonio Damasio, in *The Feeling of What Happens: Body and Emotion in the Making of Consciousness* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1999), maintains that experiencing emotion depends on your sensory-motor and hormonal systems.
9. Callaghan, *How the Body Shapes the Mind*, 24, 25, 35, 38.
10. *Ibid.*, 24, 26; see also 33, 38, 139, 142–45, 239–41.
11. *Ibid.*, 35, 38.
12. Suzie Mackenzie, "Under the Skin," *Guardian*, October 22, 2005, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/artanddesign/2005/oct/22/art.friezeartfair2005>.
13. Lynda Nead, *The Female Nude: Art, Obscenity and Sexuality* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 22, 24, 55. There are fascinating parallels between Nead's account of the female nude and Susan Bordo's account of the slender female body in *Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture, and the Body* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 195–212; however, I do not have space to explore them here.
14. Diana Tietjens Meyers, *Gender in the Mirror: Cultural Imagery and Women's Agency* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 106–15.
15. Edouard Manet, *Olympia*, 1863, oil on canvas, 130.5 x 190 cm, Musée d'Orsay, Paris.
16. For helpful discussion of the complexity of Olympia's gaze, see Alexander Nehamas, *Only a Promise of Happiness: The Place of Beauty in a World of Art* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), 111–12, 116–20; and Charles Harrison, *Painting the Difference: Sex and Spectator in Modern Art* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 49–51, 56–58. What concerns me about their accounts of Olympia's subjectivity, however, is that they treat subjectivity as if it were all in the head and revealed by the face. They overlook proprioception as a form of bodily self-awareness, and this faculty of the body schema is not well represented in *Olympia*.
17. For an alternative view of idealization in this work, see Nehamas, *Only a Promise of Happiness*, 107–108.
18. Arguably Manet is less guilty of objectifying and idealizing his nude models into abject anonymity than his predecessors. Still, it is worth comparing his individualized portrait of Victorine Meurent (1862, oil on canvas, 42.9 x 43.8 cm, Museum

of Fine Arts, Boston) with the idealized face in his depiction of Victorine Meurent as Olympia.

19. Also see Rosemary Betterton, *Intimate Distance: Women, Artists and the Body* (New York: Routledge, 1996), especially chapters 4 and 6; and Jo Anna Isak, *Feminism and Contemporary Art* (New York: Routledge, 1996), especially chapter 6.
20. Nead, *Female Nude*, 65, 72–81, 67–69.
21. For documentation and discussion of this work, see Norma Broude and Mary D. Garrard, *The Power of Feminist Art* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1994); and Helena Reckitt and Peggy Phelan, *Art and Feminism* (New York: Phaidon, 2001).
22. For discussion of Nead's images of pregnant nudes, see Pamela Allara, "Mater of Fact: Alice Neel's Pregnant Nudes," *American Art* 8, no. 2 (Spring 1994): 6–31; and for a discussion of her self-portrait as an aged painter, see Meyers, *Gender in the Mirror*, 153–54.
23. Arguably, Semmel's *Intimacy/Autonomy* (1974) also partakes of this turn-about strategy. This painting is a double nude of a woman and a man who are lying slightly apart on a bed, presumably after sexual intercourse. The table-turning feature of this image is that his detumescent penis, not her breasts or pubis, is the most conspicuous pictorial element.
24. More recently, Williams slyly inserts miniature orifice motifs into paintings that appear to be lyrical abstracts until you get up close. In these works, Williams comments on the inescapability of the erotic in painting and perhaps on the fantasies undergirding pretentious claims about the sublime that some members of the Abstract Expressionist movement put forth. In any case, she no longer seems to be interested in reclaiming the female nude for any feminist purpose.
25. Susan Bordo, *Twilight Zones: The Hidden Life of Cultural Images from Plato to O.J.* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 127–38.
26. For discussion of the cultural underpinnings of feminine narcissism and feminist artists' resistance to this malady, see Meyers, *Gender in the Mirror*, chapter 5.
27. For related discussion, see Alison Rowley, "On Viewing Three Paintings by Jenny Saville: Rethinking a Feminist Practice of Painting," in *Generations and Geographies in the Visual Arts: Feminist Readings*, ed. Giselda Pollock (New York: Routledge, 1996), 95; Michelle Meagher, "Jenny Saville and a Feminist Politics of Disgust," *Hypatia* 18, no. 4 (Autumn 2003): 34; and Mackenzie, "Under the Skin."
28. Lynda Nead, "Caught in the Act of Staring," *Women's Art Magazine*, no. 58 (May–June 1994): 18; Pernilla Holmes, "The Body Unbeautiful," *Art News* 102, no. 10 (November 2003): 145; Meagher, "Jenny Saville," 38–39.
29. Holmes, "The Body Unbeautiful," 145.
30. David Sylvester, "Areas of Flesh," in *Jenny Saville*, by Jenny Saville (New York: Rizzoli, 2005), 15.
31. Simon Schama, "Interview with Jenny Saville," in *Saville, Jenny Saville*, 127.
32. Martin Gayford, "A Conversation with Jenny Saville," in *Jenny Saville: Territories*, ed. Mollie Dent-Brocklehurst (New York: Gagosian Gallery, 1999), n.p.
33. Jenny Saville, *Herrn*, 1999, oil on canvas, 120 x 84 in., Yvicki and Kent Logan Collection.
34. Linda Nochlin describes the figure as a fertility goddess—a giant Venus of Willendorf "seen in an art's eye perspective" in "Floating in Gender Nirvana," *Art in*

America 88, no. 3 (March 2000): 96. But the posture and the body of this statuette and the figure in *Hem* differ markedly. The fertility goddess hunches slightly forward, her breasts heavy with milk. Although there is a certain resemblance between the two treatments of the rolling abdomen and pubic area, the resemblance goes no further.

35. Although she has occasionally depicted moments in stories, e.g., *Plan* (1993), Saville is not for the most part a narrative painter. Nevertheless, there is a narrative dimension to her art. Reflecting on her conception of the body and her artistic practice, Saville comments, "Most of the marks are like inscriptions on the flesh. As we go through life traces or memories both physical and psychological are left on the body; they almost help to 'produce' your body" (Gayford, "A Conversation with Jenny Saville," also see Holmes, "The Body Unbeautiful," 144). By portraying scars, wounds, and other vestiges of the body's susceptibility to experience, Saville evokes the events that produced them. Moreover, she endows her figures with a kind of embodied memory and knowledge that is necessary for psychocorporeal practical intelligence and hence for agency.

36. Schama, "Interview with Jenny Saville," 124. Saville often returns to this theme in interviews, e.g., "I mean, people who are seen as fat or overweight . . . usually have circulation problems, so there's a coldness of flesh. I think a lot of people don't think about how the body is made up" (Syvester, "Areas of Flesh," 15); "I wanted the paint itself to be kind of obese" (Schama, "Interview with Jenny Saville," 127); "For me it's about the flesh and trying to make paint behave the way flesh behaves," and "Close up I want you to feel the heat of the bodies" (Gayford, "A Conversation with Jenny Saville").

37. Because this cool section resembles modeled plaster, it calls to mind plaster casts of Greek and Roman sculpture and provides support for connecting *Hem* to ancient goddess statuary.

38. Saville's ambivalence about large women comes out in her explanation of her use of white in *Hem* to try to "thin out this big body—paint the background into the body or the body into the background" (Schama, "Interview with Jenny Saville," 127). Ironically, though, the vigor of Saville's painting on this side of the figure counteracts her attempt to render this part of the body recessive.

39. Anatomists will point out that the celiac plexus is located within the body at the same spot. The celiac plexus is the motherboard of the part of the sympathetic nervous system that controls the operation of abdominal organs, and its functioning is indispensable to life without mechanical assistance.

40. Jenny Saville, *Puterum*, 1999, oil on canvas, 9.5 × 16 ft., Gagosian Gallery.

41. Gayford, "A Conversation with Jenny Saville."

42. *Ibid.*

43. Holmes, "The Body Unbeautiful," 145.

44. For lack of space, I have not discussed two strands of Saville's work—her paintings of transsexual bodies and her paintings of battered bodies. However, it is important to consider these works to grasp Saville's conception of extreme humanity.

45. Perhaps this is what Linda Nochlin has in mind when she comments ("Migrants," in *Jenny Saville* [New York: Rizzoli, 2005], 11) that Saville's work presents a "painterliness pushed so far that it signifies a kind of disease of the pictorial, a symptom of deeper disturbances lurking beneath the visible relation of paint to

canvas." The disease of the pictorial, I suggest, is the purging of psychocorporeity from traditional female nudes.

46. In *Propped* (1992), Saville inscribes a reminder of the need for reflexivity in reverse writing on the surface of the painting. For this purpose, she chooses a text from Luce Irigaray's essay "This Sex Which Is Not One": "If we continue to speak in this sameness, speak as men have spoken for centuries, we will fail each other again" (Holmes, "The Body Unbeautiful," 146). The text, says Saville, is supposed to act as a mirror, in which "I could see my own position" (Gayford, "A Conversation with Jenny Saville").

47. Elton John, "Elton Talks to Jenny Saville," *Interview*, October 2003, <http://www.eltonjohnworld.com/protected/webspecials/BACKSTAGEPaintItRed.html>.

48. Alison Rowley makes a similar point in asserting that Saville's *Plan* produces "a rearticulation of Western modernism's discourse of the 'body of the painter.' The represented body is no longer 'the supine female object body' but the active female creative body examined in the practice of the 'woman's body'" (Rowley, "Three Paintings by Jenny Saville," 94).

49. Syvester, "Areas of Flesh," 14. Elsewhere she reiterates this point: "I don't like to be the one just looking or just looked at. I want both roles" (Mackenzie, "Under the Skin").

50. Mackenzie, "Under the Skin."

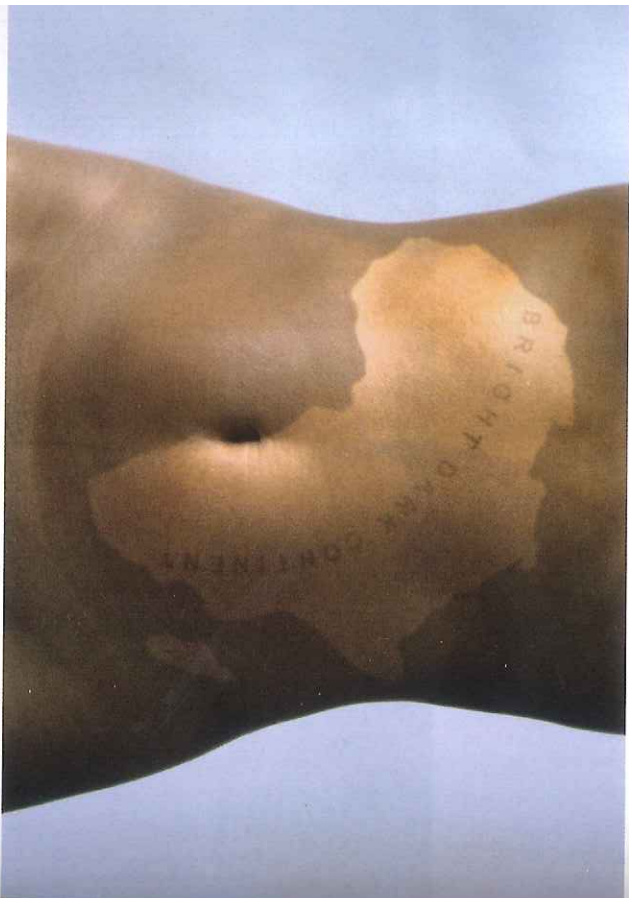
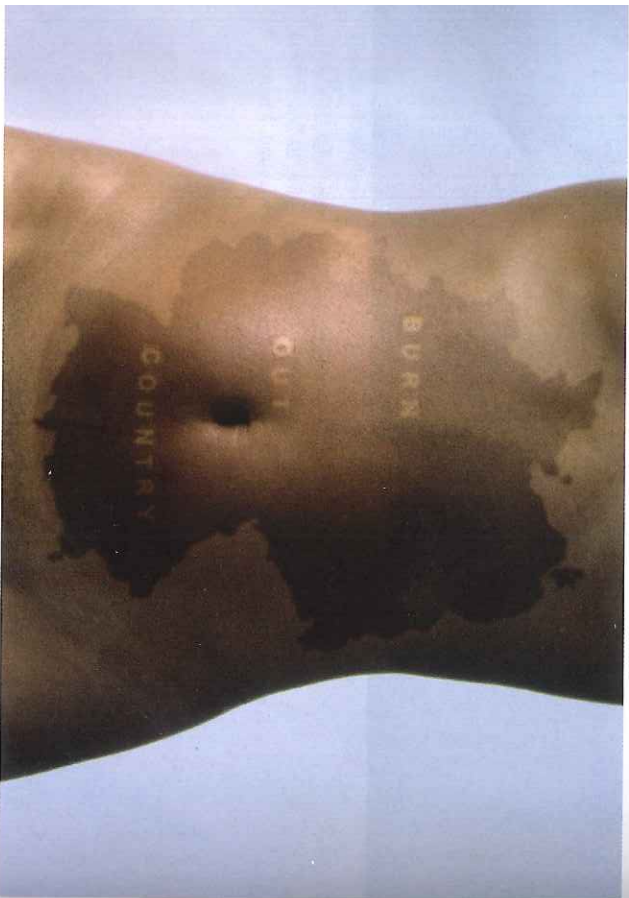


Plate 4a and b. IngridMwangiRobertHutter, *Static Drift*, 2001.
Two chromogenic prints mounted on aluminum (edition of five), each 29 1/2 x 40 1/4 in.
Collection of Heather and Tony Podesta, Falls Church, Va.
By PERMISSION OF INGRIDMWANGIROBERTHUTTER.

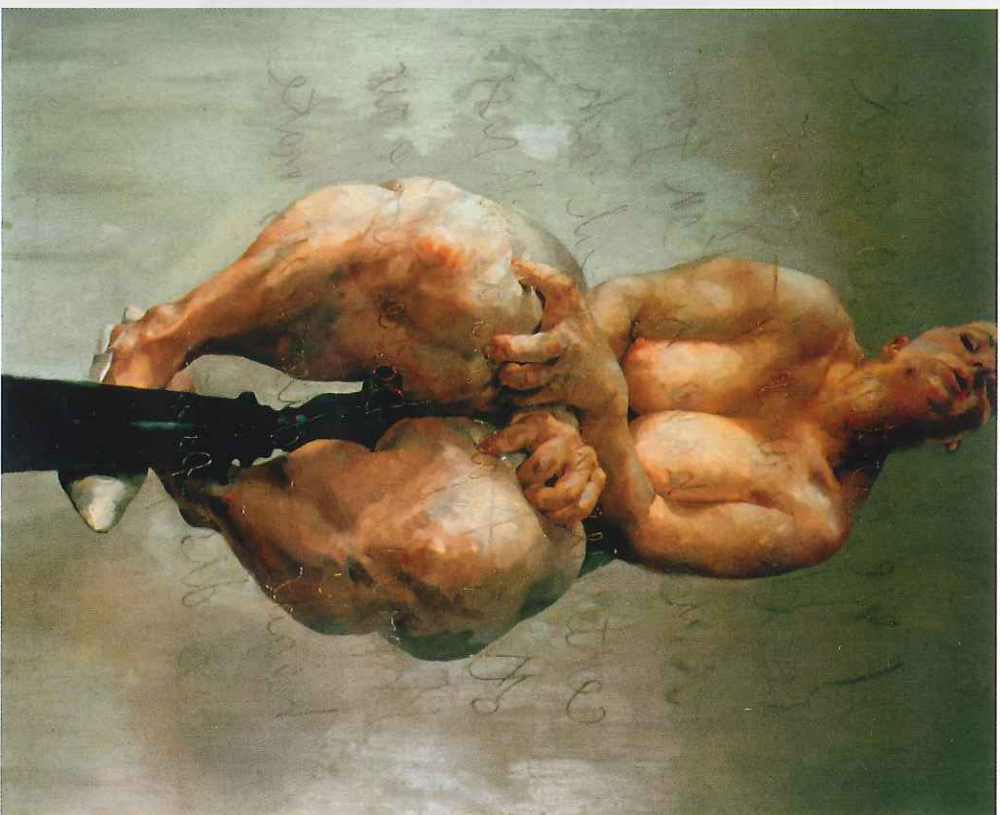


Plate 5. Jenny Saville, *Propped*, 1992. Oil on canvas, 84 x 72 in. © JENNY SAVILLE. COURTESY OF THE CAGOSIAN GALLERY, NEW YORK.



Plate 6. Jenny Saville, *Fulerum*, 1999. Oil on canvas, 103 x 192 in. © JENNY SAVILLE. COURTESY OF THE GAGOSIAN GALLERY, NEW YORK.



Plate 7. Woman repairing beadwork, Pequot powwow in Connecticut, 2007. Photograph by Phoebe M. Farris.